

Venice, seen and left,
Colleoni in his place,
too dim for home movies.

-- David Madden

Baton Rouge LA

CHINATOWN

To begin with it was purely a tourist gimmick,
a couple of blocks of chinoiserie
in imitation of the Chinatowns of New York
and San Francisco. In fact, it was inhabited
mostly by Yugoslavs.
After a while, though,
for some reason that is hard to understand,
the Chinese actually started moving in.
Maybe developers subsidized them; I don't know.
In the L.A. of those days,
as the movie amply demonstrates,
anything was possible where big bucks were involved.
Today the whole area is Chinese.
And, according to the police,
it truly is a vertex of crime.
Once again, life has imitated art.

TOAD'S WATERLOO

When we finally got a high-class French restaurant
in Long Beach, Dave and Esme Cherin
invited my girl and me there for late desserts.

While the waiter was in the kitchen
I craned my neck towards the pastry cart
and said, "Look, I can never remember
which of these fuckers is which.
Tell me a few of their names
so I won't embarrass myself."

And Dave said. "I don't recognize
any of them except the Napoleons,"
and Esme claims she said, "There aren't any Napoleons
on that cart,"

but I didn't hear her, so when the waiter returned
I said, "I'll take that Napoleon,"

and he said, "Sir?"

and I said, "The Napoleon. That one!"

and he said, "Sir, perhaps you would point at the pastry you desire,"

and I all but shouted, "That fucker there! The goddamn Napoleon!"

and he said, "I'm sorry, sir, but there are no Napoleons on the cart."

I reddened and said, "That asshole over there told me that fucker was a Napoleon,"

and Esme said, "I told you there were no Napoleons,"

and Bobbie said, "Anyone knows a Napoleon when he sees one,"

and I said, "Give me a piece of the chocolate cake then,"

and the stuffed shirt said,
"The Black Forest cake, sir?"

and I said, "Yeah the Schwartzwaldertorte,"

but, to tell you the truth, my German pronunciation didn't recoup me many points.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

BENT HOOK, BROKEN LINE, NO SINKER

The girl pulls the dress over her head.
Breasts emerge like new volcanic islands.
Rasdale's mouth rivals Death Valley in dryness.

In bed, afterwards, Rasdale asks if it was good for her too. Saying it couldn't have been better, she reaches for the TV Guide. Rasdale notes a lack of sincerity in her voice.

While driving her home, he tries to make another date and is parried at each new suggestion. Rasdale should meet her brother, she says, since they have so much in common.

The final goodbye is the closest
Rasdale will ever come to kissing a dead fish.